

Remarks

These amendments and remarks are in response to the Office Action dated May 9, 2008 ("Office Action") and are filed with a three month extension of time. Authorization is given to charge the extension fee and any other necessary fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-68 were pending, with claims 3, 15, 17, 20, 23-31, 34, 46, 48, 51, 54-62 and 64-68 being withdrawn. Claims 1, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 30, 32, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 61 and 63 have been herein amended and claims 8, 9, 11, 39, 40, 42 have been herein cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Claims 11-12 and 42-43 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were otherwise allowable. Claims 11, 14, 16, 42, 45 and 47 were objected to under 35 U.S.C. §112. Other than claims 11-12 and 42-43, all pending claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102. The rejections and responses thereto are set out fully below.

I. Objections Under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st and Response Thereto

The Office Action objected to claims 14, 16, 45 and 47 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 due to minor informalities. Applicants have amended claim 14 and 45 to reflect "parallel" instead of "parallelly" to overcome the objection. Withdrawn and currently amended claims 30 and 61 have also been amended in this manner.

Claims 16 and 47 were objected to because "a third outer thread" is claimed, but first and second threads have not been defined in the instant claim or dependent ones therefrom. This objection has been addressed with the amendments to independent claims 1, 32 and 63. The antecedent for "said second outer threads" was found in dependent claims 9 and 40 and the subject matter of claims 9 and 40 has been introduced in independent claims 1 and 32. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

II. Rejections under § 102(b) and Response Thereto

Claims 1-2, 4-10, 13-14, 16, 18-19, 21-22, 32-33, 35-41, 44, 45, 47, 49-50, 52-53, and 63 have been rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,690,454 to Smith ("Smith") under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Although not expressly stated in the Office Action, it appears that claim

63 has also been rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of DE 19720406. See Office Action, p. 8.

Nevertheless, claims 11-12 and 42-43 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections, Applicant has amended the claims to recite the subject matter indicated as allowable to expedite the application to allowance. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of previous claim 11, along with the subject matter of claim 8 and 9. Likewise, independent claim 32 has been amended to include the subject matter of previous claim 42, along with the subject matter of claims 8 and 9. Similarly, independent claim 63 has been amended to include therein the above allowable subject matter.

The Applicant believes that independent claims 1, 32 and 63 are now in condition for allowance, as indicated by the Examiner. The dependent claims are believed to be allowable due to their dependence on an allowable base claim and for further features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

III. Rejoinder Requested

Claims 3, 15, 17, 20, 23-31, 34, 46, 48, 51, 54-62, which depend directly and/or indirectly on independent claims 1 or 32, were indicated as being withdrawn and have not been cancelled herein. Claims 17 and 48 have been amended to improve the readability of the claims. For the reasons set forth above, independent claims 1 and 32 are believed to be allowable. Accordingly, Applicants request rejoinder of claims 3, 15, 17, 20, 23-31, 34, 46, 48, 51, 54-62.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants have made every effort to present claims which distinguish over the cited reference, and it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance. Nevertheless, Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance. In view of the

foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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